



SPECIAL COMMISSION ON FUTURES

(Meeting held on September 8, 2022).

THE CHAIR.— We have a quorum, so the meeting is open.

(The time is 16:09).

Good afternoon, everyone. We thank you for appearing before us today. As you know, we have been working in the Special Commission on Futures of Parliament for a couple of years now. This year, the area we are focused on is the Futures of Work, which we have been approaching through five axes. Today we will take up the fifth axis, which we call: "The governance of the work of the future: Labor regulation and policy in a change of era."

Now, we are aware that some of those appearing today are not strictly tied to this axis, but we have asked for your participation all the same because we are finishing the first stage, ahead of the preview of the first report that we will present on September 26 at a public event, which is Future Day. Since we had some communication problems, it seemed very important to us that some experts who had not been able to participate do so today.

So we thank Juan Bogliaccini, Gonzalo Zunino, Rafael Sotelo and Alejandra Picco for being here, as well as Sofía Scasserra and Gabriel Burdin, who are with us by Zoom. We also welcome the advisors who are joining us today.

This fifth axis was prepared by Representative Lilian Galán and she will coordinate it. We have divided the axes among the members of the commission, so, without further ado, we thank you for your participation.

Those of you who have been here before already know this, but for those who have not, I will let you know that we have an hour and forty-five minutes, which is the time that was set, especially on account of you, who have so many activities.

MS. GALÁN.— We specifically asked to work on this axis, because we actually know the subject well.

First of all, we thank all the experts who are with us today, because they helped us prepare this work. In addition, we have invited some people who we believe may be interested in this topic and who are advisors in my office.

We think this axis is very important and that it has some points to be problematized in relation to technology, more specifically how it impacts society, the world of work and countries. The role of the State, at this time, seemed to us very relevant.

Before focusing on these points, I want to let you know—they asked me to, quite insistently—that the experts have ten minutes to present, and they also asked me to read the questions that trigger this debate, of which you will be the cross-cutting axis.

One of the points I wanted to put on the table to begin working on this topic is that of global value chains and how to ensure human rights in this globalized world that begins to change from the second half of the twentieth century. This is not the first globalization the world has experienced, but this one has a different technique that brings countries closer together. That technology extends to all of society's life, and today we can see value chains that cut across the world we live in.

I brought an example that I find extremely graphic, which has to do with the salmon farms in southern Chile, which, although they are not new, what is new is how that production is managed, because it is not managed from that country. That is where the question begins of who holds the value in this: Chile, a sovereign country that has cold waters, or whoever manages the technology and knows the technological package and keeps building it, in this case Norway. From that country, an engineer, at a machine, manages how the salmon must be raised, when they have to be vaccinated, and so on. In another era in Chile, this would have led to the collapse of that production.

So, it seemed to me very graphic to present how this technology changes power relations and global value chains, and poses a very important challenge. Here we see how countries compete with one another precisely to attract direct foreign

investment, which countries very much need, even our own, which is very small and is part of Mercosur and is fundamental in Latin America. Countries often compete for the attraction of that capital, of those foreign investments, at the expense of concessions on working conditions, in new-generation international treaties, where the issue of property and value is very important.

It seemed to me that this has to be put on the table, and today the approval of a binding treaty on transnational corporations and human rights is under discussion. I have given some of you the book that we worked on for a long time at the School of Government of the Chamber of Representatives. This treaty is under discussion and went through a process that began in the United Nations Human Rights Council with Resolution No. 20/9 of 2014, which created a working group and is by now on a third draft, in which Uruguay, through its mission in Geneva, has participated intensively. It has done so because in the National Human Rights and Ombudsman Institution a working group on this topic was created several years ago, in which not only Parliament participates but also the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the ministries that have to do with this topic. In addition, there is an interinstitutional dialogue with the social organizations that are also participating.

I am not going to go on at greater length about this topic because it is not exactly the matter we have to consider today, but we think that this regulation, and the institutional framework that would allow us to address the future, obviously with greater social well-being—which is ultimately the role of States—and to balance norms at the international level, is still a pending matter.

The other aspect I wanted to put up for discussion is technology-mediated labor relations and their impacts, above all the gender impact, which has been studied extensively. In this futures group, I recall that in the last session we said it was very important to project changes into the future taking gender mainstreaming into account. When the IDB representative was here, he developed this topic. We know there are very important academic studies in our country from different institutions. In this regard, I am thinking of Iecon at the Faculty of Economic Sciences and Administration.

We know that in recent years, and much more since the pandemic, there has been an increase in the use of technologies mediating labor relations. Perhaps the changes that jump out at us are the prominence of remote work, precisely because of the pandemic that the world went through, and the emergence of platforms that have

grown richer in this world cut across by COVID, such as the Uber platforms, deliveries, and so on.

We are going to have a speaker who is a specialist in this topic, but I want to say that although the use of these technologies can represent some opportunities for inclusion and greater development for social groups that are often vulnerable, whether because of territory, academic background, sometimes because they are a minority or, in the case of women, because they face a larger gap, when technology is included in labor relations and public policy, it can lead to a loss of labor rights, depending on the use made of it. We know that technology is, a priori, neither good nor bad—Sofía Scaserra is going to work on this aspect much more—but the way in which it is incorporated into the world of work will determine whether those labor relations develop without loss of rights and without making working conditions precarious. I say this thinking precisely of the boom in these technologies, which has led to workers doing their jobs on bicycles, delivering goods over many hours of work, with precarious wages. I have two more points to problematize and then I will finish.

I am now going to refer to the role of States and to technological progress as a result of public investment. We know that public investment is fundamental, that States have a very important role, not only in public investment in these technologies, which are sometimes carried out in the first instance by States, but also as a guarantee of respect for human rights and of current legislation. Therefore, it seems to us that the role of States has a lot to do with this technological progress and with the legislation they put in place. The public funds for financing these matters determine how these technologies develop in our societies.

The last point I want to mention—which is also an aspect to problematize—is basic income as a balancing element between labor and capital. Who appropriates the income generated by the introduction of these technologies? We say that these technologies are often financed by public funds and, therefore, all of society contributes to their development, but those workers are made precarious and have working conditions that sometimes force them to start over with their studies because they lose their jobs and have to resume their working trajectory.

So, the point is how the State guarantees their survival during those periods when they are starving or have an income that we might call a basic

income, precisely so that they can retrain, study and prepare for this world of the future. The idea is that they can survive and not have very precarious jobs.

I have much more to say, but I do not want to monopolize the floor, so we will move on to reading the questions and then to the experts' presentations, because I think that is the part that will most enrich this axis.

The questions are grouped under institutional framework and are as follows.

What institutional and regulatory mechanisms might be necessary to facilitate and enable processes of transformation of work?

Which ones would accompany these processes while protecting labor rights?

How do we imagine the construction of this institutional framework?

Where are the main difficulties or inhibitors of change, and what might be the enhancers or enablers of this change?

If the labor market is globalized, how do we globalize labor relations?

Is it necessary to have a minimum agreement on working conditions to be respected?

What are possible institutional arrangements at the global level?

The other umbrella of questions has to do with labor reasons and redistribution. There the questions are: What role or roles will employers' organizations and employees' organizations—unions—play in the creation of alternative futures for work?

What will be the organizational forms of workers who no longer share a common workplace? Remote work, uberized jobs, and so on.

Lastly: what are the mechanisms for income distribution at the national and global level in a scenario of automation, substitution and loss of certain jobs?

That is the proposal. Now we give the floor to the presenters. The first is Gonzalo Zunino, who holds a doctorate in Economics from the Autonomous University of Madrid. He has a master's degree in Economic Analysis from Carlos III University of Madrid and a bachelor's degree in Economics from the Faculty of Economic Sciences and Administration of Udelar. He is a partner and researcher at Cinve - Center for Economic Research -, where his recent research has been devoted to microeconomic analysis, human capital dynamics, labor markets and social security analysis.

Thank you very much.

MR. ZUNINO.— Thank you very much for the invitation. Unfortunately I am going to have to leave early because I have a class at the university. I should clarify that it is macroeconomics, not microeconomics. Since I had already excused myself other times, I did not want to excuse myself again. Even so, I know that several of my colleagues have many more interesting things to contribute on this topic.

If we talk about institutions and governance, I think there is a first point on which I fully agree with what was raised, namely that in a world that is moving toward more globalized work, it is also necessary to globalize, or to have minimum agreements at the international level, on labor rights and the regulation of the labor market. To be concrete, the ILO has a relatively simple proposal, which is to generate frameworks similar to those common in maritime work; regardless of which sea they are in, or the flag of the ship, or the port where the workers are, there is a common framework of labor rights and human rights that are respected. I think the ILO's proposal goes along those lines. It is about reaching international agreements, global agreements, and I think it is a very reasonable proposal in a context where it is increasingly possible to lose the physical thread of the employment relationship, because employer and employee do not have to be in the same physical place. I think it is reasonable to move forward on that front. It is also very important to move forward even though, as with other issues, countries may think they are losing some degree of sovereignty. I think it is impossible, or very inadvisable, for countries to try to compete to attract transnational companies or investment in general on the basis of reducing labor rights. This is similar to the global

minimum tax in tax terms. There comes a point where the competitive scheme produces a situation in which everyone loses, and in an economy that is globalizing, it is necessary to generate global agreements. I know that Uruguay can contribute on that issue, but unfortunately its weight in the agenda of global agreements is sometimes not what would be desirable, but it is the path to take.

Another issue that seems relevant to me in institutional terms is that of conflict resolution. I think it is an issue that is being settled by the force of events, and I do not know whether the current institutions are sufficiently prepared. What do I mean by this? For example, whether platform workers are employees or independent contractors. What is the global experience? Who ends up ruling on whether they are one type of worker or another? In general, the courts end up ruling. The Uruguayan courts do not necessarily reach the same decision as the courts of Brazil or of some European country. I have serious doubts—perhaps it is not so—that the justice system is prepared to start handing down that kind of ruling and to start resolving the problems that may arise. It seems perfectly fine to me that the courts be the final instance for resolving conflicts, but the institutional framework for those kinds of problems would need to be strengthened, and I think we would need to legislate beforehand. That is, to try to avoid many legal vacuums being created, where at the end of the day the one who decides is someone who probably does not have all the elements on the table to be able to make a reasonable decision.

As for non-standard employment relationships—which were also mentioned here—I think there are two issues that in legislation or in the usual world of work are starting to become poorly defined: the workplace and the length of the working day. I know that work is under way to regulate those two points. In that sense, I think legislation also has to move forward, and quickly, to resolve those problems. The usual legislation is rather designed for a workplace and a work schedule that unfolds within that framework. I think these two institutional figures are becoming somewhat more diffuse, and it is necessary for the law on remote work and non-standard employment in general to try to define these frameworks adequately so that afterward, at the end of the day, they do not go back to the courts and there is a judicial resolution of those issues.

From a more global point of view on institutional matters, precisely regarding what are called labor institutions, I would say there are many in the labor market. A first global view I want to put forward is that, in my judgment, labor regulation is fundamental and conditions do not exist for it to lose ground within the framework of labor market regulation. Why do we regulate the labor market? This is a topic on which in the economic literature, perhaps two, three or four decades ago, it was thought that all labor regulation was bad. Many people still think so, in the sense that any type of regulation or

institution that is in place hinders the free market or the functioning of the labor market, which ends up generating unemployment and problems.

As in any other market, the economic literature holds that when there are market failures, regulation is needed so that the solution that ends up emerging at the end of the day approximates the socially optimal one. The labor market has many problems, some of which are called market failures. There are competition failures because firms have monopsony power when hiring. There are information asymmetries that are bilateral: there are employers who have information that workers do not know, just as there are workers who have information that employers do not know. Information asymmetry problems are typical market failures. Above all, I think there are very important externalities that cause the private benefit of establishing an employment relationship to deviate from what is socially optimal. These externalities have to do with the creation or accumulation of human capital, especially for the future. Any deviation and labor instability generates specific problems for the worker who faces that situation or who loses his job, but it also generates problems in the accumulation of human capital of his family and his children. It also generates externalities in terms of health and social security costs. If there is too much labor instability, we have a lower density of contributions from workers, and that takes funding away from social security. Probably, at the end of the day or of the working career, retirement benefits and pensions will have a higher degree of subsidy, or the workers will simply end up with non-contributory retirement benefits or pensions. So there is an externality in terms of health and pensions, but also in education. The new modes of work or the changes that are occurring in the labor market do not change or eliminate those externalities.

So, I think it is important that the starting point not be to think of the arrival of new modes of work as a scenario in which it is necessary to move toward a more deregulated labor market. I understand that the regulatory scheme has to change precisely so that everyone remains within the systems of social protection, collective bargaining, and regulation of labor rights, but we cannot move toward a more deregulated system.

Basic income and so on were also mentioned. I think another of the labor institutions that most needs to be strengthened is the one relating to active labor market policies, continuing training and job retraining. Why? Precisely because of what we were talking about today. In any case, I am a bit skeptical about believing that we are facing a scenario in which the labor market will undergo rapid and highly relevant transformations. Unfortunately, the adoption of new technologies in Uruguay and

throughout Latin America is a bit slow, and the transformations that occur in the labor market are not at the speed one might imagine when reading literature generated for other kinds of developed countries. Nevertheless, we expect a pattern of movement and transformation in the labor market in which one type of job loses share and is replaced by another. There is a need for retraining policies. In that regard, I think Uruguay has institutions devoted to that, although perhaps the policies are not sufficiently targeted. There is a whole idea of moving toward what are the jobs of the future, or of everyone going into software and programming. Really, that kind of policy ends up failing, and we need to be more realistic about the design and targeting of job retraining programs. I think that in that regard there should be a general review, and there should be more participation by the public sector. Why? Because one of the changes projected is that workers will probably have more instability within firms. That makes firms lose some of the incentive to bet on continuing training and the retooling of workers, because they simply then have difficulty capturing that benefit.

That is, again, there are externalities. For us, as a society, it is useful for workers to reinvent themselves, retool and generate new human capital. That is socially optimal, but firms, for fear that in two or three years the workers will leave and that accumulated human capital will end up being exploited by another institution, lose the private incentive. That divergence between private and public incentives produces what happens with many public services or goods: they are socially optimal, but the financing scheme starts to move away from the private solution. There is a problem of clear definition of property, and so private actors have less incentive to invest there.

I will close with this. I will try to listen to some of my colleagues, but then I will leave quietly because I have to teach.

MS. GALÁN.— Thank you very much.

The floor goes to Gabriel Burdin, who holds a bachelor's degree in Economics from Udelar; a doctorate in Economics from the University of Siena, Italy; is an associate professor at the University of Leeds, England, and a member of the National System of Researchers.

(Dr. Gabriel Burdin connects via Zoom).

MR. BURDIN.— Thank you very much.

First of all, I greet everyone.

(Cross-talk).

It is a pleasure to be able to take part in this new session of the commission. I hope to be able to do so in person when I go to Uruguay next week. I was very interested in the framing of this particular activity; it is a topic I have been thinking and writing about for some time.

To begin with, I want to weave this discussion together with the ones that took place at the earlier panels so as not to lose the overall picture. Today we are going to discuss labor regulations and institutions and how these can be functional for, or represent an obstacle to, technological change, productivity growth and the dynamics of inequality. At earlier panels it was discussed, first, that technological change—at least, that is what I tried to put forward—is essential for an aging country like Uruguay, because it is fundamental to increase the productivity of employed people in order to sustain a universal social welfare system. Second, to take advantage of the opportunities of the new technological scenario, we need firms capable of implementing the technologies competently, and in countries like Uruguay—developing Latin American countries—we have a long tail of low-productivity firms with underdeveloped management practices, which puts them in a difficult position when it comes to implementing new technologies. Lastly, we need workers with the skills necessary to operate the new technologies. That is where all the challenges tied to the education system and to the vocational training of workers appear. All these topics were discussed at earlier panels.

What should be done from the perspective of labor regulation and labor market institutions? On this, I have quite a few points in common with what Gonzalo Zunino raised in the previous intervention.

First, the idea of "the less regulation, the better," which has some currency in certain intellectual and political circles, is a terrible orientation for

thinking about the issues of technological change and the future of work. It is important to understand that a deregulated labor market is not competitive, or purely competitive, as we thought thirty years ago in economics. In reality, it is a market regulated by employers. For example, in the prototype of the deregulated labor market, which is the U.S. labor market, contract clauses proliferate in employment contracts that prevent workers from moving to competing firms. It seems paradoxical, but those levels of rigidity can arise in a market that is actually not deregulated but regulated by employers, who are the more powerful party in the employment relationship.

Does that mean we can regulate in any way at all? No, we need smart regulation that does not hinder firms' ability to combine labor and capital productively, but labor regulation is necessary, and even more so in this new technological scenario.

A super interesting element in the research—which is very recent, emerging—on the effects of new robotics technologies on the labor market and their consequences for employment is that we are seeing the introduction of technology with job loss in the United States and the introduction of the same type of technology with relative employment stability in European countries. These are two worlds with very different labor regulation schemes. The United States typically has a more liberal approach, where there is basically no strong regulation of the labor market, and Europe continues with its classic mechanisms of collective bargaining, employment protection, and so on. So, the same technological shock can affect societies very differently depending on the characteristics of their labor regulation. This is an element that emerges from contemporary research and that countries like Uruguay must keep very much in mind.

I want to review some traditional chapters of labor regulation and, in each one, understand what the implications are and what the possible areas of reform are, the challenges that countries like Uruguay face in this new scenario where we must think about how we take advantage of the new technological dynamics.

A traditional area of labor regulation is the protection of those who are employed, for example through protection against dismissal. In general, in a good number of countries—Uruguay is one—employers face certain costs when dismissing workers. Uruguay is in a reasonable position in terms of those dismissal costs, and I do not think it is an area where too many innovations are required. The idea is that one has to fine-tune the levels of employment

protection. One would not want dismissals to be free for employers, because when an employer is dismissed there is a set of externalities, as Gonzalo Zunino put it. There are social costs, there are costs in terms of the worker's health, there are costs in social security—because that worker's income has to be sustained and society as a whole does so—and there are costs for families, for children.

So, as a society we want an employer who dismisses a worker to pay a certain cost, so that the dismissal is not free for them. Nor do we want that cost to be extremely excessive, because that could discourage the employer from making new hires. Obviously, if as an employer I know I have to pay a very high severance, I will think twice before hiring a new worker. So we want neither the deregulatory ideal where the cost of dismissing workers is zero nor an excessive cost when it comes to dismissals. Uruguay is in an intermediate position, with reasonable levels compared with similar countries. I do not think this is an area where major innovations need to be made, but neither is it one where Uruguay should reduce the levels of protection against dismissal.

Another important area of labor regulation is wage setting. Here there are two mechanisms that Uruguay has in force: one is the minimum wage, the idea that there is a minimum wage floor that any employment contract must respect, and the other is collective bargaining, a mechanism by which, at the sector level, minimum floors are also defined by job category, along with other working conditions. In this area Uruguay has a framework with high coverage, which has been consolidated over the last fifteen or twenty years, after successive and intermittent situations in relation to it in earlier periods. Here I identify some elements in which the system could be improved. One is to move toward much more protocolized schemes to allow opt-outs or exit clauses for firms. Another is sequential bargaining mechanisms, whereby the sectors most exposed to international competition, the export-oriented sectors, negotiate first, and then those sectors set a benchmark that is taken into account by the sectors less exposed to international competition. A third element—which for me is very important—is the incorporation of mechanisms for worker participation in firms on non-wage matters. There is broad experience with this in European countries. We can mention the 2002 European directive on information and consultation of employees, which standardized the rules on this matter for all European countries, and the regulations introduced by Finland in 1991 and in 2008, which establish worker participation in works councils to discuss, be informed and, in many cases, to influence aspects tied to the organization of work and employment within

firms, and also participation at the level of their boards of directors. This is an area where there are examples of recent legislation, and I think Uruguay could clearly move in this direction.

Recently, in research we have done for Europe, we showed that, for example, these mechanisms are positively associated with the adoption of new technologies, largely because these mechanisms facilitate the development, within firms, of activities and practices that are complementary to the use of new technologies. Information is shared between unions or workers' representatives and the firms; worker training activities are carried out more intensively, as well as various practices that are necessary to use the technology productively. All of this is facilitated by these cooperation mechanisms within firms, which are articulated and coordinated with the more traditional sector-level wage bargaining.

So, changes are required at the level of the wage-setting and collective bargaining mechanisms. I know that Parliament has a bill under discussion. Since I do not know it in depth, I am not going to comment on it in particular, but I know that these aspects are not covered, and for me they are key elements of what should be an incremental improvement of the collective bargaining system in Uruguay.

Another important area of labor regulation concerns employment contracts and non-traditional contractual forms. Here the issue of self-employed workers and of emerging platform-based work arrangements arises. Self-employment is extremely heterogeneous in any country and in Uruguay in particular. We have self-employed workers with very low incomes, with irregular activities, with formal and informal activity, with permanent transitions between the informal and formal sectors, as well as high-income self-employed workers in professional activities. So it is an extremely heterogeneous universe.

To give you an idea, in 1985 in Uruguay 18% of those employed were self-employed, and in 2019 it was around 24%. The map has not changed very much, or has done so very slowly. We are likely headed toward a situation where it will be more common to have transitions among various contractual arrangements. Wage employment remains absolutely predominant, but we are likely headed toward a scheme in which people have changing forms of labor market insertion throughout their lives and alternate wage employment with self-employment.

So, regulation must be prepared, first of all, to be neutral with respect to employment contracts. Labor regulation, in principle, should not create incentives toward one side or the other. Therefore, it is necessary to look at the tax schemes for wage earners and for self-employed work and make sure there are no arbitrage possibilities between the two systems. This is particularly important in high-income self-employed work, where opportunities sometimes arise to use the tax base of self-employment in order to pay less in taxes.

It is also necessary to provide self-employed workers with a set of benefits that wage earners enjoy. We have to universalize the matrix of labor rights to cover those workers in these matters. I am referring to sickness insurance, maternity, and so on.

What particular elements arise in relation to platform work?

It is an incipient form of work, in particular for low-skilled workers, but in some professional services too it is a work opportunity with an international dimension.

In the low-skilled worker sector, in the Latin American context and in Uruguay, I think platform work represents opportunities that have to do with their inclusion in social security. In general these are workers who alternate between jobs in informal work. There are also many situations of migrant workers in this sector, which we have to look at carefully, but in which there is payment traceability, digital payments. So it is a sector where the opportunities for the formalization of workers who previously did not have them are potentially significant and we must take the fullest advantage of them. For example, it has been suggested that there should be schemes for automatic exchange of information between the platforms and the social security and tax agencies—our DGI and the BPS, for example—to achieve perfect traceability of payments and ensure that these workers make the corresponding social security contributions and have access to certain social security services and benefits. It seems to me this is an area to think about in particular.

Then there is the discussion of whether the workers are providing a service or are in a traditional employment relationship. I think there are regulatory elements related to occupational health that must reach these workers. Regulation also should not stifle certain opportunities for flexibility that

these jobs provide and that some workers find attractive, but we must also bear in mind that working conditions in these sectors should not become precarious. That is an element that labor regulation, conceived from this perspective of the future of work, must take into account. This is an incipient, emerging phenomenon, but if the idea of this commission is to think about elements to anticipate processes, it is important.

One last point I want to refer to—and with this I will finish—is regulation on occupational health and working conditions, another traditional area of labor regulation.

What elements arise in relation to the new technological scenario?

I am going to raise an element that particularly interests me and that is the subject of discussion, above all in European countries. It has to do with the possibilities that the new technology offers employers to monitor their employees' activities, to watch whether workers are doing their tasks properly and, on that basis, to impose sanctions and make decisions that penalize workers. That is a complicated scenario, because the new technologies offer a practically unlimited possibility of invading workers' private lives, not only for those who work remotely and who can therefore be monitored in real time by their companies through their computers, but also for workers who do in-person work. This is an area where labor regulation, thinking from this perspective of the future of work, should also consider some elements, because there are values at stake. On the one hand, employers want to carry out the production process and need to organize it efficiently, but on the other hand there are elements that have to do with workers' privacy and dignity that can be violated by an intrusive use of the new technologies. This is an area where regulators in the developed world are beginning to think cautiously, and I think our country should also act in the same direction.

MS. GALÁN.— Thank you very much.

I do not want to be unpleasant, but it is important to keep an eye on the time, because everyone has to leave and we are going to be left with no one to finish today's session.

We are going to make a small change in the order, because Dr. Juan Ariel Bogliaccini has to leave in a few minutes. He is a full-time professor in the Department of Social Sciences, holds a doctorate in Political Science from the University of North Carolina and a master's degree in Education Policy from Alberto Hurtado University in Chile. His areas of research are comparative politics and research methods in the social sciences. He is also a member of the National System of Researchers.

MR. BOGLIACCINI.— Thank you all very much.

First of all, I want to apologize because I have to leave at 17:30. I have to go pick up one of my children; I can't leave him stranded. I will talk about that for a minute later.

So, I am leaving you the presentation I had prepared, titled: "Labor relations of the future. Let's not throw the baby out with the bathwater." That is a bit the idea of what I want to put forward.

Basically I am going to talk about four aspects: coordination, cooperation, modernization of regulation and, finally, the role of the State.

To provide some context—I agree on many points with Gabriel Burdin and Gonzalo Zunino—it is worth mentioning that throughout the twentieth century Uruguay structured its political practice—that is, how we relate to one another politically—around social dialogue. That is very unusual in Latin America, and in that sense we have a matrix very similar to the European one. However, it is a social dialogue without regulation. If we look at the regulatory structure of social dialogue in European countries and compare it with ours, we see that we hold on much more to our good will, and it has always been that way. We have the tradition of sitting down to talk when we have a problem; our country's size possibly has an influence.

It is important to keep in mind—I am a political scientist—that labor relations structure social relations in a much broader sense than simply workplace regulations; they affect social peace and a society's capacity for dialogue. It is very important to keep that in mind when we think about how we are going to move into the future.

Tying this in with what was pointed out in earlier sessions and taking into account this idea of technological change, it seems very important to me to remember that we have a country divided in terms of job opportunities, the result of a very unequal educational attainment. We have two Uruguays: that of those who finish high school and that of those who do not. The capacity for technological adoption, the capacity to work in the formal world and many other capacities are very limited in this latter group. What can we do? Change it. We have already talked about the education system side, but we have to manage it within the framework of labor relations, because it is a legacy that we are going to have for two or three more generations. Until we manage to change this situation, more generations may be affected.

I have a hunch that the doors of the knowledge society do not open for everyone in the same way. Alternative forms of social integration are growing, associated, for example, with criminal activity. So, I think it is very important to think about this in terms of the frontier.

In labor relations—without of course denying the existence of different interests, often opposed, between the two main social actors: labor and capital—it is key to deepen strategic coordination, seeking complementarities. Our labor relations are more about confrontation than cooperation. Why? Because, given the very structure of our labor market, there are few occasions to cooperate, and I am now going to go into that topic a little more.

What would be ideal? Thinking ahead about strategies in which we can incorporate the idea that labor and capital are partners. In Portugal they call both of them *parceiros sociais*, that is, "socios sociales" (social partners); the expression does not sound right in Spanish. This is very important because in Uruguay we have few occasions for dialogue and cooperation, and they are strictly tied to when the wage councils meet. We have to think of other, different structures in which to sit down and talk in a more structured way. For example, in some European countries there is what are called "social agreements," which are much more macro than simply labor agreements, but which provide structure. They are made once a year or every two years. In Uruguay we have some sectors, such as construction, metalworking and chemicals, that are especially cooperative and coordinate with one another.

I am going to refer very briefly to the construction sector, in which the State had a fundamental collaborative role in the training of construction workers, financed on a tripartite basis by the State, the workers and the employers. That later led to a tremendous set of developments in which these two partners collaborate in

many ways. Why was it necessary to facilitate it? Because—as Gabriel Burdin and Gonzalo Zunino pointed out—in Uruguay our labor market does not require specific training, but general training or training specific to the sector. So we have a set of issues that they mentioned—and I am not going to go on at length—associated with the fact that no one has an interest in training anyone, because "I train you and the other one hires you for a bit more money."

The State's facilitation in these markets, which are about general skills or skills specific at the sector level, is key to lowering costs and also to fostering higher levels of coordination and cooperation. So, how do we increase cooperation among social actors? It is key that the political system—thinking about the social relations of the future—convey the idea that this is the only game in town. We are not thinking about reforms to change everything, about regularizations, re-regularizations. Cooperation and coordination are based on all of us understanding that this is the game we are playing. If there is the possibility of slipping out the back door to another game, there will always be someone interested in doing so.

Gabriel Burdin mentioned another aspect for improving cooperation. In the Netherlands, opt-outs are processed only on the basis of clear criteria of need with shared information, and that greatly facilitates cooperation. In several countries, incentives are created for regular bargaining, such as the possibility of special agreements in hard times. In some way, this was done in Uruguay during the pandemic. A set of elements emerged for the labor market—such as insurance schemes—that were limited to a particular moment when we had a problem, and the State was able to find ways to promote or facilitate this associativity through, for example, tripartite financing of skills. There is something I said last time and I will repeat it now: in this area, as in education, much more information has to be generated and access guaranteed, both for firms and for workers, and also for technical bodies that can help in thinking about solutions for the future.

How do we improve coordination? The labor context of the future is dynamic. There is a greater separation between work and personal time. That is not so clear; for example, I now have to go pick up my children. More time is needed for care tasks, education and training. There are new modes of work—already mentioned—that are individual, associated with working from home. The Netherlands and Portugal, for example, have a very interesting system that we can think about, although there are others. There they have a mechanism of customizing conditions at the firm level within the sectors. That is, bargaining always takes place at that level and is not pushed down from the sectors to other areas, but there are certain aspects of customization that are negotiated at the sector level and then work like an à la carte menu. The firms

together with the workers select: narrow bands for wages and working conditions according to the possibilities of the firms and workers; minimum increases with productivity agreements on top of those increases; a trade-off between wages and à la carte working conditions. A firm that cannot offer a higher wage may be able to offer some working conditions, something guaranteed beforehand by the sectors. I am not saying these things should be done, but rather that I am putting some important elements on the table that can help us think about the future.

Another important point is modernizing labor regulation. In line with what Burdin and Zunino have said, there is an extensive literature on the idea that attracting foreign direct investment does not necessarily mean lowering labor standards and labor regulation. Naturally, the type of foreign investment I am going to get is in keeping with the regulation I have. If I want more attractive foreign investment with good labor standards, I have to improve my population's skills. We cannot expect foreign investment of excellent quality in labor terms and have a completely uneducated population, just above Guatemala in education completion rates. So, we have to move in order to achieve convergence.

For various reasons, Uruguay is not competitive in a race-to-the-bottom context in terms of labor regulation. That is very clear, we have to bear it in mind, and I do not see it as a possible scenario.

Working-time regulation has to be adapted a little. Some of our rules are about a hundred years old, so they have to be adapted to new phenomena. Then, we always have to keep in mind the problem of informality. For Europeans the main problem is unemployment and for Latin Americans it is informality; it is the portion of people who work outside a formal employment relationship. Everything we do and all the technologies we incorporate have to be aimed at improving those aspects.

Another point is that the State must play a very important role in the labor relations of the future. Today we have a State that functions more as a decision-maker—in the tripartite relations within the wage councils—than as a facilitator. An example of a facilitating State is one that helps finance, for example, the construction sector and on that basis generates a whole set of cooperation and coordination between the two actors, which is key. So, as a State, we should aim to improve bipartite cooperation in training for skills specific to the

sector. That is an area where it is key to be able to intervene to trigger new processes.

Broader tripartite spaces have to be created to reach agreements and social pacts. In Uruguay we do not have this idea of the social pact that many European countries have, which are much more macro and key.

Certainly, I think the wage councils should not be emptied of content, but in some way the State must always maintain a commitment to the bipartite, that is, to encouraging cooperation between labor and capital. Why? Because in our current scheme, I can be as confrontational as I like because in the end the State is going to step in, make a decision, and that will help. So that is fine, I think we should not dismantle it, but we have to think clearly about how, as a State, we can encourage the autonomous bipartite. There are sectors that have it on the basis of very deep conflicts they experienced at other times, out of which they managed to cooperate because they realized that if they carried on like that they were going to exterminate each other.

Lastly, I think more and better information has to be generated and made available to social actors and the technical world, in order to facilitate evaluations and the generation of a body of experience.

Thank you very much.

MS. GALÁN.— We give the floor to Alejandra Picco, who is an economist from the University of the Republic and currently part of the Cuesta Duarte Institute of the PIT-CNT.

MS. PICCO.— Thank you very much for the invitation and for the chance we are given to think a little about these things. Often, in our daily work, it is hard for us to lift our heads and take a medium-term view.

I am going to try not to repeat myself, because many of the things I was going to say have already been said. In that sense, I am going to try not to be too disorderly and to go along answering some of the questions.

Both Gonzalo Zunino and Gabriel Burdin cleared the way quite a bit. I want to clarify where I was going to stand with respect to what I was going to say. Without a doubt, all the changes that are being experienced and are coming in the world of work from the irruption of technology and the mediation of technology in labor relations must be addressed with regulation. I believe that rules and institutions have to be adjusted to those changes, but we also have to leave behind the discussion or the arguments that make it seem that regulation is not designed for a world with more technology at work or even in labor relations. That is a fallacy of those who consider labor regulation to be an impediment to economic activity. That has no empirical support whatsoever but is still put forward, so I think it is good to take a stand there.

I am going to make some comments, in particular, on some labor market institutions, on all the institutional framework that has been created. Much progress has been made in collective bargaining, which is basically what I work on.

I think Uruguay has very great strengths. I am going to point them out first and then I will talk about some weaknesses or matters we have to work on, because they are a pending debt today in collective bargaining, and even more so if we think about all these changes that are taking place in the world of work.

As was said, today in Uruguay more or less 70% of those employed are in a wage-employment relationship. That is quite particular in the region and different from what happens in Latin America. As Gabriel Burdin said earlier, I do think there is an important difference between the protection that workers in a wage relationship have and what independent or self-employed workers retain. This great predominance of wage work means that the collective bargaining system has very broad coverage, because it covers one hundred percent of wage-earning workers. However, there is a disparity between the regulation and rights that protect wage-earning workers and non-wage-earning ones. This leads to the mediation of technology in labor relations being used as a way to try to dodge or disguise a wage-employment relationship to the detriment of the rights that workers may have. I am referring, for example, to platform workers. In this case, I think self-employed, independent workers are a very broad category. I am more concerned about workers with weaker or poorer objective conditions. In that sense, I think technology is often used as a way of concealing or disguising a wage-employment relationship, so as to strip protections and ultimately make employment precarious.

Regarding the advantages of collective bargaining, first of all, I think wage setting done in that framework has very significant coverage. This is due to the large weight of wage-earning workers and also to the fact that collective bargaining has very broad effective coverage and not only on paper. It is very easy to predict what is going to happen with the evolution of wages if one simply imputes the adjustments from the wage council resolutions to the different sectors of activity. That is, that has a real, very important impact, not only in the rule or in the regulation. I think that has to do with coverage and is a big strength that we must work on.

Second, I consider it a very important strength—perhaps I have some differences with certain aspects that Mr. Bogliaccini just raised—how that collective bargaining should take place and how it should be thought of going forward. I think it is a strength that we have collective bargaining where the predominant level is the branch of activity. That does not rule out thinking about other forms of coordination at the sector level, whether through value chains or the incorporation of supranational agreements, but given the conditions Uruguay has, it does not go to the tripartite.

MR. BOGLIACCINI.— What I said was that that is the Dutch situation, not ours.

MS. PICCO.— Regarding the tripartite, I think it should be the predominant mode of bargaining.

Having the branch level be the predominant level is good not only in terms of, for example, mitigating wage disparity and protecting the weakest workers, or those with poorer conditions in that bargaining, but it also gives very important force to the wage policy deployed by the Government. I think that has impacts not only on what happens with wages but also on other dimensions such as income distribution and poverty levels. I therefore consider that the branch level should be the predominant one, but that does not rule out there being others that accompany it.

I also think that the tripartite should be the form of collective bargaining for those same reasons. I think the State has to be in the bargaining, particularly in wage setting, but also in working conditions, because today

in collective bargaining perhaps the law has to determine minimum wages by category and also wage adjustments. However, it goes much further than that, since working conditions are set and, in the end, the wage council resolutions are what establish working conditions that, in general, are above the general norms for workers in the different sectors of activity. I think the State must be there given all the implications that has for working conditions and wage policy and for how it links to other variables that are part of people's lives. That is why I think the State should not disappear.

There was a triggering question about how we imagine those workers' organizations in particular should be, or those forms of representation for workers who may be working separately or not day to day with their peers. Obviously, that creates new challenges, but it is something that collective bargaining has often already resolved, even for workers in more precarious conditions or with much lower starting levels. That has been resolved, for example, in the case of paid domestic work, where they do not all work together, or in home-based work by garment workshop workers. So I think there is a challenge there, but not an impossibility, for the representatives in collective bargaining ultimately to be the workers' organizations, the most representative business organizations and the State.

A point was mentioned that, I think, is a great weakness we have today in the collective bargaining system, in labor institutions, and it is that the State has a very important role to play with respect to the availability of information. It is a topic that seems to me quite difficult to tackle because, on the one hand, the State should be a promoter and lead those processes, but in reality there is a very strong culture of not showing information that should be broken. I think we have to think about that going forward if we want issues such as changes in the organization of work, training, and the incorporation of new technologies to be discussed—I think it should be this way—on a tripartite basis and within collective bargaining. For that to happen, information is required. At present, that is already an obstacle. From my point of view—perhaps we have some differences, even with the people I work with—it is unthinkable to set wage adjustments in the medium term without those wage adjustments having any reference to sectoral trajectories, beyond whatever intuitions there may be about sectoral trajectories. For that, indicators are needed that, obviously, must be endorsed by the parties, but that must be on the table.

There is often fear of showing information; that also happens with opt-outs. In Uruguay I think there is a lot of fear and a lot of reluctance on the part of firms to put information on the table. Although the State should promote it, we already have quite a lot of the path cleared because there are business chambers in most sectors that handle that information, and it does not have to be broken down by individual firm.

Another thing that was mentioned quite a bit is the issue of loosening, or flexibility, in some labor regulations that would appear as an impediment or an obstacle to the introduction of those new technologies. There was quite a lot of talk, for example, about flexible hours in the working day. I think those issues have to be addressed sector by sector. It troubles me a great deal to think of some general rule that could make the daily working day flexible across the board. Perhaps that would not trouble anyone or be very strange in some sectors, but nobody would like—for example, drivers—to have a totally deregulated daily working day or weekly one. It would be quite dangerous. I think all of those things have to be thought through sector by sector and within the framework of bargaining. Moreover, I think that discussing loosening the rules creates an obstacle, for example, for the union movement, because when that subject is discussed, the thinking is always about adapting people to the needs of the production process, and people and their needs are not put at the center. So, that is one of the problems.

Another thing that does not contribute much to this debate is that, in general, when that flexibility is discussed, for example, of the working day or of remote work, the examples given are of more thriving sectors or of more highly skilled or higher-income workers, and that is precisely not where the problem lies. Therefore, I do not think these examples contribute to the discussion.

Nevertheless, I do think there are a number of matters in the general regulation that can be made more flexible at the sector level, but, evidently, that has to happen with information, in a discussion at that level.

I think I have nothing more to say. I will gladly answer if there are any questions.

MS. GALÁN.— Next, we give the floor to Rafael Sotelo, electrical engineer with a telecommunications option from Udelar, holder of a master's degree in Business

Administration from IEEM, doctor of Telematics Engineering from the University of Vigo, director of the Research Area of the Faculty of Engineering of the University of Montevideo and a leading figure in quantum computing.

MR. SOTELO.— Thank you very much for the introduction and the invitation. I feel honored to be with you and to be able to share my perception of this topic.

I should mention that after the initial kickoff of this group for participating on this topic, I had no further communication until these past few days, when they invited me to this particular session, which seems to me extremely relevant.

As was mentioned, my experience comes from engineering. I am also a member of the National System of Researchers in the area of engineering. I am also a teacher at the University of the Republic—I started in 1989—and I have been an advisor to companies in various cases.

Nowadays the people I am most in contact with are the ones Alejandra Picco mentioned: those with greater training and possibilities, above all in exports. When I was called to appear before this Special Commission on Futures, on the subject of the future of work, I imagine that, which is where Uruguay has the greatest opportunities to develop. For Uruguay, the irruption of artificial intelligence and globalization can be—depending on how we take it—a great opportunity to bypass the major geographic difficulties we have. The pandemic proved it: we have a good telecommunications infrastructure and good training of people. It was possible to keep working immediately, and for many people the possibility opened up of continuing to work on equal terms with organizations in the core countries. That brought opportunities for the sectors that were mentioned and, probably, for the others too.

My only brush with regulation came during my engineering degree—for six months—with Héctor Barbagelata, doctor of Law and Social Sciences, an occasion in which we covered everything; I was one of the few students who went because I am very interested in the subject. I have no closer contact than that. For a long time I have been developing technology while being close to Uruguayan and international leading figures.

Another area in which I work on a volunteer basis is the IEEE, an organization, a kind of association of technology engineers, which has 400,000 members and generates

standards and holds conferences. There I take part in various activities, which has given me the opportunity to be exposed to a lot of people. It is something I consider very good, in general, for Uruguay.

Based on what I understood from the questions, I am going to read my brief answer—which I submitted in writing—and I will make some further reflections based on what has been commented on.

As I was saying, based on my experience—which is what I described—the process of transformation of the world of work, with the irruption of technology and, in particular, artificial intelligence, together with the process of globalization, has been beneficial for workers, business owners and entrepreneurs. I would add that it has also been so for Uruguayan users. Starting from that, I have an optimistic view of the impact of technology on people, in particular on their work and on different facets of society. A strongly positive aspect is that in some areas this transformation has made it possible to temper the disadvantage that Uruguay's geographic situation represents for the world of work. This has happened, in part, spontaneously and stimulated by a certain regulatory flexibility. It is worth noting that today we can see the use of certain technology and foresee other uses. For example, platform employees were just mentioned; I think that is already present. Although it could increase, I do not see it so much as something for the future.

On the other hand, one of the new things about the uses of technology is regulation, if it can be interpreted as something that already exists. That is, there is certain regulation on how one works, in what way; we will have to see whether what comes through platforms changes substantially or not. In short, today there is certain technology, which we know and about which we foresee there may be other uses, but there will also be technologies or modes of use that we cannot even imagine.

Therefore, with respect to what was proposed in the call about building anticipatory institutions, I do not think it is a good idea, since it could inhibit the development of these things that we cannot even imagine, or the development and virtuous use of what technology makes available.

One thing that seems important to me is to generalize agreements with other countries to avoid double taxation and allow Uruguayan workers to work abroad—they already do so a lot, but we do not have those agreements with other countries—and Uruguayan employers and entrepreneurs to be able to hire workers abroad.

The call referred to concern about scenarios of automation, substitution and loss of certain jobs, as well as the impact of globalization. I think a hugely important focus is education, both of the people who suffer this impact directly and, especially, of the younger generations. There has been talk of problems that weigh on us, of workers who are suffering these things now, but I think we must think—and if we speak about the future, much more so—about education—I do not know whether the topic has already been dealt with in this forum; I assume it has—especially of young people.

In that regard, I think some of the main things to convey in this concern for education should be, especially, a taste for abstract thinking and the English language—fundamental in this globalized world—so that we can integrate properly in all spheres, both from Uruguay outward and with the people who visit us. In the core countries that are not English-speaking, everybody speaks English. Moreover, in meetings between corporations or people from different countries, that is, with different native languages, English is spoken. So I think it is fundamental that we Uruguayans have good training in the language.

Another important aspect of education is closeness to technology, because that is where the world of the future is headed, as we all recognize. Exposure to international experiences with the core countries is interesting, mainly in order to learn from their example. Sometimes we see virtuoso children or adolescents who go to compete at NASA or at some other institution so outstanding worldwide. Let us try to make this more common, so that our children can have contact or exchange with schools in other countries in order to gain experience and learn where the world is going and how those other children see it.

Another fundamental matter is openness to change, and that from our education onward we know that the world changes and that we are going to change. I hope we all have a taste for permanent learning, as we see at least among those of us in this area. I graduated many years ago and, for better or worse, I have had to study permanently, and the same happened to those who came before me and to those I teach. There is always the need for permanent training and personal improvement.

I also want to comment that one sees reports from leading bodies such as the European Union or The World Economic Forum, in which many creators are working toward the outside.

Another trend concerns the difficulties of measuring the eight hours in remote work. A trend that the European Union itself mentions in its own documents is the issue of evaluation by tasks. Going down that path may be much more than going for an evaluation based on completing eight hours of work. Beyond labor flexibility, that is put forward as something more suitable for this world that is coming.

On another note, the subject of public investment was mentioned. In the core countries we see that in cutting-edge technologies they build the future with public investment; private investment comes afterward. In these few years I have witnessed what public investment is in certain countries in a particular area, which was mentioned as a reference, and I am grateful for that; I am referring to quantum computing. On that topic countries have a gigantic multimillion investment, and private investment only took off last year. I can provide more information if it is of interest. This is not new, it goes back earlier, and this practice of public support is not only national but also regional—as happens in the European Union—and provincial in countries such as Spain, Canada, and so on. In those cases, the provinces support academia, industry, and academia-industry interaction with public investment. That is how, in many cases, innovation and the building of this technological future happen.

Lastly, I want to mention a couple of very important topics, such as artificial intelligence, which has an impact not only on work but also on everyone's life. There is a fundamental ethical issue to be concerned about. For example, the intrusion on the worker in order to monitor him was mentioned. We have to be very attentive to how that works, to what things one may be willing to accept and how they are monitored, or what we can allow to be monitored and how far.

In that sense, I think there are things that are already regulated for everyday life, and this is just one more manifestation. That is, there are colleagues we are listening to online and it is as if they were here. So, nobody has the right to spy on another person; that is a crime anywhere, and there is no need to interpret or regulate anything more there.

I thank you and remain at your disposal.

MS. GALÁN.— Lastly, we give the floor to Sofía Scaserra, economist, associate researcher at the Transnational Institute, member of the Institute of the World of Work, director of the Observatory of Social Impacts of Artificial Intelligence, member of the Alliance for Inclusive Algorithms.

MS. SCASERRA.— Thank you very much for inviting me.

It is hard to close out the presentations after those made before. The colleagues who spoke before me presented very apt and thorough views on the challenges of the world of work that await us, in the face of the present, in the face of the transformations we are experiencing.

I begin by saying that technology is not neutral. Technology does not come given in a neutral way; it is conceived by someone who has intentions and objectives, which are not necessarily bad, but which perhaps are not the ones we pursue as a society. An example I like to give on this subject is the history of the bicycle. The first bicycles were Penny Farthings, which have a big wheel in front and a small wheel behind, and which we now use as a vintage decorative object in our homes. These bicycles could only be ridden by men; they were considered elite bicycles for strong, agile, powerful men. The bicycles we know today were at first made in secret because the big manufacturers did not want the brand to be associated with power, with skill, with the best-looking, most powerful, strongest and most skilled people. So women and elderly people, who found the Penny Farthing bicycles very complicated to ride, began in secret to ask the craftsmen to make bicycles for them so they could go to the market. This very silly story, about an old technology—because bicycles have already been with us for quite a few decades—has left us a powerful lesson: that the technologies we consume from the mainstream, the ones sold to us and that brands produce, are not the ones that suit us as a society, they are not the technologies that serve all of us and empower us. So, it is often necessary to start regulating technologies by asking what goals we want as a society.

I have heard it said here that technology has a lot of potential, that it can get Uruguay inserted into the world, into value chains, and that is so, it can do that, but it will not do so automatically, nor does it have to. Technology is designed with an objective, with a purpose, which can be to make workers precarious, or to automate them, or to monitor them, but not to empower them. So the first thing we have to ask ourselves

is whether the technology we are inserting into the Uruguayan productive matrix, which is being inserted into jobs, empowers Uruguayan workers or is a technology that makes them precarious, automates them or replaces them.

In that sense, I find it interesting to understand the importance of the State and of regulation. Obviously, regulating the future is impossible, we cannot do it, but we can regulate the present, and when we do, I think we always have to keep in mind that the best solution to all of society's problems is more democracy, much more social dialogue. Therefore, we must develop a new agenda of labor rights conceived no longer with an Industrial Revolution or Fordist productive paradigm in mind, because evidently technological intermediation enables other forms of production and other ways of forming global value chains, as was very well described here. Fordist factories with an assembly line and one worker next to another no longer exist. Today the factory is the internet, the computer; the assembly line is all of us who are connected to the network, so we have to start thinking about the labor rights agenda with the mindset of the digital capitalism we are living in and not with the mindset of the Industrial Revolution of a century ago. In that sense it is necessary to introduce a new agenda of labor rights suited to this technological intermediation, which, although it has brought enormous benefits, has also caused enormous problems.

We believe that a fundamental labor right that we have to regulate throughout Latin America and the world—in some legislations they are already timidly getting there, but it has to be stronger—is the right to digital disconnection, because workers really are working twenty-four hours a day, on weekends; they have internet connections and receive messages from work all the time.

The right to disconnect is not the right of workers to throw their cell phone in the trash or to leave the boss on read, but rather to not be bothered outside their working hours, to have clear guidelines about the hours when they may receive messages, perhaps at a time different from the working day, which can be implemented through an on-call system and so on, but which, once set, must be respected. We have lost the sovereignty of free, quality time, which is a right not only of workers in this new industrial revolution but also a feminist right, because when answering outside of hours becomes a new job skill, we women have far fewer chances of doing so, given that most of us devote a great many hours to the care economy. Moreover, receiving messages outside of hours does not allow the organization of care tasks within the home, because even when the family wants to organize and divide them up, if calls from work get in the way

it is very hard to achieve. Therefore, it is a right not only of workers but also a feminist one.

Surveillance was mentioned here. Evidently, the protection of workers' data is key. We have to start having an agenda for the protection of workers' data. Both Argentina and Uruguay have a data protection law and, right now, in Argentina we are discussing a new data protection law that it would be important to update with a labor rights agenda, so that workers can know what data is being collected about them, as well as delete it or take it with them when the employment relationship ends.

In addition, unions would have to conduct audits to find out what data is being held about workers and how it is being used. Is it being sold to third parties? Is it being used for spying or blackmail or to affect workers' careers? Evidently, the union has to be aware of these matters, because it is fundamental that it be so.

We would also have to think about data co-governance, so that workers are part of that table and are told what data is going to be collected, under what circumstances and for what purpose, and data that has nothing to do with the productive function should not be stored.

Now, there are other new rights. It was mentioned here that technology increases worker productivity. So, if that is the case, has anyone thought about negotiating better wages for workers or a shorter working day? It is important that parliaments keep this in mind, because it cannot be that, if there is an increase in productivity as a consequence of technological adoption, that benefit goes to the employer while the worker, who has a multiplicity of tasks and can get more done in less time, receives nothing.

Lastly, a new labor right that arises with technological intermediation and that the working class has to start putting forward and fighting for is that choosing working hours is not a synonym for autonomy. There is a relative sovereignty over working time that we workers have won, as a product of technological intermediation, and it must be a new labor right. In Argentina the remote work law established that people who have dependent children or adults with special care needs can choose their working hours, and although they have to work the number of hours stipulated by contract, they have the right to step away to take the

child to the doctor or to take them to and from school. This is extremely important. We have to start fighting for sovereignty over working time, because it is a demand not only of the working class but fundamentally of young workers, who increasingly find in autonomy something desirable simply because they feel they can control their own working hours. This is an outrage. Sovereignty over working time—relative sovereignty over working time—should be a new labor right and not a synonym for autonomy. This has nothing to do with autonomy. There is a relationship of dependency, but we workers have gained sovereignty over working time thanks to technological intermediation, and we have to use it to our advantage in this sense, to win more rights and better working conditions.

To conclude, I think it is extremely important to point out that every time technology is introduced into a workplace, it be done by consensus and gradually. There are many examples around the world of unions, States and companies that have negotiated gradual forms of labor reinsertion for workers when a new technology comes in that will replace or change their working conditions. Evidently, training is needed, and it need not be borne by the worker or merely by the State, but can be carried out jointly by all the actors in society.

That is why I say it is important to respond with more democracy, with more collective bargaining, with more tripartism, with more actors seated at the bargaining table. We understand that if we are going to have a technological change that modifies the productive matrix of our economies, the way workers work and the way companies do business, it is fundamental and necessary that this be done with social dialogue, with consensus in society and with a new agenda of rights so that technology is not designed, built and used to make workers precarious, subjugate and automate them and replace them, because we do not want increasingly weaker economies, with lower wages and higher unemployment rates. What we want is to leap to development like Latin America and to have better working conditions for our workers. Therefore, I think we have to respond with social dialogue, with democracy, with a consensual insertion in terms of training, audits, time frame—that is, taking into account how long it will take to carry out that new technological insertion—and impact on workers' lives, and of understanding whether that technology was designed locally and respects the cultural and social patterns we have within our region or whether it does not respect them and does not take them into account. Only the workers, represented through their union, can say that, because they are the ones who have the capacity to say whether that technology is affecting their lives negatively. I often hear business owners say "We understand, we

understand," but then, when it comes time to do the audit, an outside company is hired to see what is happening within the business setting where the technology was applied. If we want to know whether a technology really affects workers' lives, we have to ask them, represented through the union, and not a multinational company that comes to do a consultancy.

So, I think it is very important to start understanding that this bargaining has to be broad; a productivity bonus has to be negotiated, but also time frames, training, forms of technological insertion, audits and a host of other agendas that have to do with understanding that this technology is going to affect the lives and productivity of those workers. Therefore, regulation is necessarily required, both at the national level issued through congress and at the level of collective bargaining through a collective labor agreement.

I will not go on much longer because the session has to close, but this is the contribution I wanted to leave, in a way, with an agenda of rights that I think it is important to start understanding in regulatory terms, facing not what is coming, not the future, but the present, what we are living through today, which is a brutal change in the way of production because we have left the Fordist industrial revolution behind and are facing a new digital or technological capitalism that has evidently changed the way of production through technological intermediation and that needs a new agenda of dialogue and collective bargaining.

Thank you very much.

MS. GALÁN.— We have run out of time. We had two more guests who were going to present on basic income and the binding treaty, a topic on which they have been working for a long time. We would like to propose, Mr. Chair—because there is no more time—that they send us their contributions in writing so they can be incorporated into the verbatim record.

Contribution of Prof. Christian Adel Mirza

Contribution of Alberto Villarreal

MR. MIRZA.— I am a professor and also an alternate Representative; several of those here know me.

I want to propose to the chair of the commission that he include in his agenda the option of universal basic income as a topic for discussion, because it is being debated worldwide. From ECLAC to the ILO, by way of the World Bank and the IDB, they are discussing universal basic income. The concrete proposal is that you note the topic on the agenda and, eventually, if you consider it necessary, summon us to make a presentation.

Thank you very much.

THE CHAIR.— Our time ran out today, but I want to point out that we set that schedule because we all have limited time. This is a process that continues. We always say that our Finnish model took four years in its first stage to address this topic. I am referring to the conference "The Future of Work, the Work of the Future, a View from Uruguay." Next September 26 we are going to present a first preview of a first annual report that will be finished next year. The topic of universal basic income has been raised and we will keep talking about it, among other aspects.

You are all invited for next September 26 at 18:00 in the events hall of the Legislative Palace where, I repeat, a first preview will be released, because there were many contributions and we do not want to lock ourselves into a report in which, among other things, we have requests from many of the experts to take part in the review of that report and also to have enough room to make corrections and even discuss it. That is why I am letting you know that on the 26th of this month, basically, a preview will be presented in which the participation of the experts will be discussed and some headlines of the contributions will be released.

Present are Lydia Garrido, who is the expert accompanying us, Bruno Gili, who is connected by Zoom, and unfortunately Inés Fynn was unable to attend because her father passed away today. So, we have a working team and we will continue this process. As you know, the work schedule is one session per month, and many sessions remain to complete even this first report.

We are going through this process and there are many topics to explore in greater depth. We apologize to Engineer Sotelo because it was not the specific topic, but his contributions were very good all the same.

On behalf of the Special Commission on Futures we also thank the legislators and everyone who has accompanied us for being here, and we look forward to seeing you all on September 26 at 18:00 in the events hall of the Legislative Palace.

The meeting is adjourned.

(The time is 18:05).

Montevideo, Uruguay. Legislative Branch.